
Subject: Re: Coyote Library

Posted by [davidf](#) on Fri, 26 Jan 2001 17:57:29 GMT

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Jason P. Meyers (jpm7934@cis.rit.edu) writes:

- > Here are my questions for Dave which I think will be of general
- > interest:
- >
- > 1. Is there a single zip file that contains all of the publicly
- > released "Coyote Library" files? Purpose: Ability to place all coyote
- > files in a single directory.

Well, here is the problem. Life goes on, but books are kind of static creatures. (This is true even the way I publish books, which is to make small print runs and update frequently.)

What happens to me is that I get a good idea, which is still a novel enough occurrence that I act on it right away, and I make a change to a file. But I have already described how a program works in one of my books. So the question always becomes, "Is this a change I can get away with substituting for a 'book file' without anyone suspecting? Or this a fundamental change to a program that is more along the lines of the way the program *should* have been written if I was thinking straight when I wrote it."

Sometimes its the former, and--less frequently-- it is the latter. In any case, book files tend to diverge from my library files over time. Because I like to delude myself that *someone* must be reading the darn things, I hate to overly muck with book files. This is especially so with First Edition programs, which go w-a-a-y back in time.

So, to answer your question, if it were me I would get the "library" programs, coyoteprograms.zip. These are always the most up-to-date versions of any programs I talk about. For the most part, these programs will work in a fashion that is similar to the programs with the same names that are described in your book. (If the program works radically differently, I have given it a different name. For example, PS_FORM in the 1st Edition and PSCONFIG in the 2nd Edition.) If you can handle a little messiness in your life, you will probably not be

overly confused. And if you are, I'm always standing by. :-)

If you do as Jason does, and installs several versions of the programs, make sure the "library" directory is first on your path. I have a conglomerate sub-directory myself, that I create by installing the book files first, and then overwriting everything with the same name by installing the library files. (Actually, I have directories coming out the wazoo, which is one of the real problems with this kind of publishing, but that is a story you really don't want to hear.)

So far, the good news. Now a bit of the bad. :-)

I don't have enough hours in the day to update the zip files every time I make a change to a program. So, unless a program has a fatal error, the zip files are updated frequently, but not constantly. If you are using a program that doesn't seem to work correctly, you should always check for the latest version by downloading the specific instance of the file from my web page:

<http://www.dfanning.com/programs/whatever.pro>

This version is always concurrent with what I am using myself.

Now, as far as PWD goes, that darn thing much be one of those virus programs. I don't have a clue how that program got into the book files, except that it is so darn useful that I probably copied it about 100 times on my computer so I would never be without it. :-)

And to complicate things even more, when I teach courses I always carry around a file called coyotecoursefiles.zip. This contains *everything*: book files, program files, neato-keno files, whatever I have lying around that I think might be useful in a class. This is sometimes available via anonymous FTP, but not always. I usually post it about a week before I teach a class and remove it about two weeks afterwards. (It is really too much effort to keep this current with everything else.) This is the contents of the subdirectory I have on my own personal IDL path. If it is there, you can get it like this:

ftp://ftp.dfanning.com/pub/dfanning/output/idl_course/coyote_coursefiles.zip

> Finally, I would like to thank Dave yet once again for a great set of
> programs. I find my self using them without even knowing it.

Jason has become one of my biggest fans. **Blush.** He must
have gotten a good grade on his final project. :-)

Cheers,

David

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Coyote's Guide to IDL Programming: <http://www.dfanning.com/>

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